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Finance Committee Minutes 03-06-2002

ARLINGTON FINANCE COMMITTEE
 MINUTES OF MEETING
 7:30 PM O'Neill room Community Safety Building
 3/6/02 (Revised)

ATTENDEES:

Janowitz*	Feinleib*	Kocur*	O'Neill*	Mahoney
DeCoursey*	Connors*	Simmons	Morristette*	
Tosti*	Foskett*	Deyst	Ronan	
Piandes*	Franclemont*		Olsen*	
DuBois*	Howard*	Fanning*	Tosi	Kneeland*

* Indicates present

VISITORS: Minuteman School Committee member Erin Phelps, Minuteman School Committee Vice Chair Betsy Connolly, Development Director Minuteman High Tom Markham

MINUTES of 2/27/02 approved as printed. Unanimous.

GENERAL: Tosti reviewed the budget status using a revised budget-summary spreadsheet. After deleting the reserve for snow removal (\$200k), estimating \$110,000 for a proposed hotel tax, increasing the overlay surplus to \$500,000 and updating the department budgets to match Finance Committee votes, the budget deficit is \$1.85 million. (Does not reflect the 10% cut [in state aid] recommended by the House Ways & Means Committee.

TRANSFER: The Noise Abatement Study Committee has requested \$1,155 to replace and calibrate their sound meter. Fanning to inquire about insurance on the previous meter.

ARTICLE 54 MINUTEMAN SCHOOL: Markham, using an extensive handout, reviewed the proposed budget. This \$15.7 million budget shows an average assessment increase of 2.3% for programs or 3.7%, including capital expenditures. Arlingtons enrollment increased 4.6 full-time-equivalency students. The assessment will be \$2.29 million, according to the regional agreement, a 17% increase. According to the education reform rules, the assessment would be \$2.015 million. Markham answered a variety of prepared and extemporaneous questions.

There are no 9th- or 10th-grade Choice students. There are 150-out-of-district Cambridge students, but if Cambridge revives its vocational-education program, this source of students may dry up. A \$200,000 "public information" program is in its 2nd year. All districts but two allow their middle-school students to go to Minuteman for recruiting visits. The other two districts allow Minuteman to come to them for the same purpose. Markham thinks they are making some progress. Minuteman has worked with other regional schools to modify State law to enable out-of-district 9th graders to attend a regional vocational-technical school if the program they want is not offered locally. Currently students must wait to 10th grade before this choice is available. Although the enrollment is now almost 1000 (2/3 in district), the school believes it could survive at 500. There are 41 PG students. Markham said these are serious, not "hobby", students who are chartered by the Dept of Ed. The Chair told the Minuteman representatives that the Finance Committee will not be able to make a recommendation until May. He suggested that local and regional schools will be treated equally. Possibly this expense should not be treated as a fixed cost.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS:

The Executive Secretary provided a revised hearing schedule: 3/11 Article 24 CPA; 3/13 School Committee Budget & Articles; 3/20 Town Manager and BOS Articles & Budget; 3/25 Art 62 Hardy School. He also provided a revised warrant w/ some renumbering. The attached chart has been renumbered to match.

RESERVE FUND BALANCE: \$231,272

Peter B. Howard, secretary

Budget & Article Action Summary

